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THE ABUSE OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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The accompanying article is likely to cause some dissent on the part of some of our readers. None the less, we advise that it be read carefully. There is no doubt that good men are nowadays—and doubtless with good motives—misreporting facts of various sciences in the interests of some theological propaganda. It is useless to argue with a man obsessed with any peculiar doctrine, but there are plenty of fair-minded men who really want to get at the facts rather than corroborations of their own opinions. To these men we particularly recommend DR. RICHARDSON'S article. It will at least show them that caution is necessary in handling any scientific statement.

Perhaps next to the study of the Bible itself in the original languages there is no more important study for the earnest student than that of biblical archaeology. A dead world with its life and literature and religion has been raised to life during the past hundred years, and we can see, as never before, the world in which Israel lived and which helped to mold her life and thought.

From mounds and graves innumerable objects have been recovered and stored in the museums of the world, and we are now able to see the whole of that ancient world almost as well as the men of that old world saw it. In fact, we can see what they could not see. We can see the history behind them and can trace out the influences which played such a great part in their life. Little did men dream what was to be given to this world when Claudius James Rich, in 1811, found the inscribed bricks on

the site of the ancient Babylon. Into the story of the excavations I cannot go at this time and must refer the reader to the published accounts where he can follow the story in all its details.¹

My purpose at this time is to examine the use made of these remarkable finds by certain scholars in the interests of a belated theory of the Scriptures. So much has been given to the world that it is to be regretted that scholars will bring into contempt a noble science through timidity and excessive conservatism. But this is being done almost weekly.

It seems impossible, or well-nigh impossible, for certain modern men, as it was for those "of old time," to see the value of the other man's standpoint. Centuries ago Naaman asked the question: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" It was natural to ask this. Why should any Israelite

¹ In Roger's *History of Babylonia and Assyria* is to be found a detailed account of both the recovery and the decipherment of the Assyrian monuments. See also *Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century*, edited by Hilprecht. The student will also read the works issued by the Society of Biblical Archaeology, the Palestine Exploration Fund, and the Egypt Exploration Fund, to mention only a few.

presume to say that his river was the best river in the world? Was not the prophet carried away with his patriotism? A man's river is, of necessity, the best in the world to himself, at least he often thinks so. And so only too often a man gets the idea that his opinion, like his river, is the best in the world. How easy to believe that the theory of the other man is wrong and baseless! How difficult to examine it fairly, especially if we are opposed to it! Yet if we cannot examine it fairly we ought not to take up the pen.

And yet such seems to be the attitude of a number of writers whose standpoint is that of the over-conservative in matters of biblical criticism. No doubt they are absolutely honest according to their light. We admire their efforts in defense of traditionalism as we find it still current in many quarters. But have they availed themselves of all possible light? Are they not too fearful for the ark of God? Have they carefully studied the works they set themselves to criticize, or are they content to accept the reviews of some prejudiced reviewers? That this latter is the case we know only too well in many instances. That they have not accepted all possible light is evident, and at times they admit that they have been unduly carried away. That they do not know at first hand the works they criticize is inconceivable when one thinks of the position they occupy. Only one alternative is left: a false patriotism for the realms of traditionalism has so dominated them

that they cannot see the value of the river of the other man.

After reading over a number of articles and books of a biblical and archaeological nature of late, particularly two well-known religious magazines, I have been amazed to find a method of argument used against higher criticism in which archaeology has been made to witness against those things which it does not oppose when looked to for a plain unbiased history. Archaeology is not the perjurer. It is because of this garbling that I have been led to write the present article in the interests of honesty in dealing with archaeological facts.

The main thesis is summed up in the words of the principal exponent of the writings I have mentioned:¹ "And what is more striking than anything else is that during all the sixty years of archaeological research not a single discovery has been made which goes to support the fundamental principles and positions of the higher criticism, while discovery after discovery has been made to prove the truth of the traditional view of the Bible." Yet another writer who at present has the popular ear writes: "When we come to look more closely at the details of archaeological testimony the historical setting thus afforded for the events of the Bible narrative is seen to be exactly in harmony with the narrative." "The recent testimony of archaeology to the Scriptures, like all such testimony that has gone before, is definitely and uniformly favorable to the

¹ For many reasons I think it better not to name either writer or journal or book. Such citation has a tendency to make the article too personal. It is a condition against which I raise an objection, and because of the condition I will omit names of those I criticize. Perhaps some will criticize me for this, but I am certain that the majority of readers will understand my purpose.

Scriptures at their face value, and not the Scriptures as reconstructed by criticism."

It is only fair to both these writers to say that they direct all their criticisms against a theory, or theories, which the vast majority of critics worthy the name have long since left behind. Letting this pass, however, I do not quite understand what the first writer means when he tells us that "discovery after discovery has been made to prove the traditional view of the Bible." I do, however, understand that more than once, as I hope to show, the archaeological facts have been so garbled that they have been "made to prove" what they strongly contradicted when left to tell their own story. By this I mean that these writers, in spite of their theme, have been led to misstate facts in the interests of a theory.

Let us examine a few details that have appeared in certain religious weeklies during the last few months. Here is an article entitled "Making Israel's Sacred Tent." A foreword informs us that "the bold claim of the destructive critics of the Bible is that no such tabernacle as Exodus records was erected in the wilderness, since the Jews could not have secured the materials for its building. How such a claim stands the test of the present fact is clearly shown" by the writer, the article being a reprint from a volume from his pen.

We do not ask who the destructive critics are. We will not ask the serious student to read the account of the tabernacle in Exod., chaps. 25-30, or Num., chap. 7, in the light of what he knows of the geography of the Sinaitic Peninsula (where, according to all these

writers the exodus took place), or even in the light of Num. 3:6 f.; 7:8, for such a study will perhaps lead to troublesome questions for the conservative position defended by these writers. I ask that he pay attention to the "present facts" brought against the "destructive critics" to prove the truthfulness of ancient story. What are these present facts? We are told that there may have been such a tent, for "Egyptians have in all ages been famous tent-makers." The connection between Egyptian tent-makers and an Israelitish tabernacle is not very plain to us, but this is the first part of the evidence. Then the events regarding the tabernacle must have taken place because "the shittim wood, out of which the boards, tables, etc., were formed, is the only wood suitable for such purposes to be found in Sinai." No difficulty was experienced in the procuring of copper, for "copper was being mined by the Egyptians at Wady Nasb above the Wady Baba before and after the exodus." But where is the connection? we ask. Did the Egyptians allow these escaped slaves to take all the copper they needed from the mines, while they themselves worked for it? Is it at all likely that the Egyptians would mine it for them? Did the Israelites work their own mines in the very face of the Egyptian government? If not, where did they get it, and how? Were they even near the copper mines? In spite of the many arguments brought forward for the journey down to Jebel Musa, we cannot yet accept the evidence.

No difficulty would be experienced in the procuring of "badger skins" (A.V.), "seal skins" (R.V.), translated "porpoise skins" by our writer, for

"the porpoise is found in great numbers up and down the Gulf of Akabah." "There would not have been the slightest difficulty in procuring enough of these dolphin skins to make such a covering as was required for the tabernacle." But did the Israelites have such a love for the water at any time that they would go dolphin-hunting? If not, how did they get the skins? Can we assume an arrangement with the Egyptian government?

Still further, the question is asked: "Why may not Bezaleel have been one of the school-trained artists who were employed and encouraged by Queen Hatshepsut?" I would answer: Because he was too young by a few generations at least to have been alive and encouraged by a queen who was dead long before Bezaleel was born, if we can accept the chronology practically proved for the date of the exodus. According to the vast majority of scholars it took place under Merenptah *ca.* 1215 B.C., while Queen Hatshepsut lived *ca.* 1550 B.C.

But apart from this, have we any warrant for reading present-day experiences of travelers back into the exodus story, no matter how useful such experiences may be for the purpose of illustration? This is where so many writers fail, in that they do not distinguish between "illustration" and "confirmation," two vastly different matters. Would it not be well to prove first of all, if that is possible, that the events recorded in the exodus story actually took place in the Sinaitic Peninsula and before the traditional Sinai? To argue that leather must have been common in the exodus because we see it today made

up into sandals for the camel-drivers in the Peninsula does not prove anything for the story, in spite of the argument put forth.

What critics maintain is, not that a tent, or tabernacle, was impossible at that time, but that such a tent as is described in the exodus story is impossible when we take into account the geographical and other conditions of the Peninsula as it then was and is now. Space again forbids discussion, but if the reader will read carefully the volume *Exodus*, by Dr. Driver in the "Cambridge Bible Series," he will see what can be said upon this matter by a leading biblical scholar who is at the same time a keen archaeologist. After this notice, and after the matter given by Driver, I feel that the first writer has simply misstated the case when he says that "discovery after discovery has been made to prove the truth of the traditional view of the Bible." The fact is, that in this case, at least, archaeology has wonderfully vindicated the conclusions of higher criticism as those conclusions are given today.

Yet another writer gives us an article entitled "Testing Old Testament Criticism for Ourselves." In the early part of the article some admirable things are said for which we thank the writer. In the latter part of the article the writer discusses the critical views regarding the Book of Deuteronomy. The whole argument against the critical view of II Kings, chap. 22, is the fact that Dr. Naville "has called attention to the fact that law-books were deposited in the temples at their erection, and often found when the buildings were repaired." We admire Naville for the splendid

work he has done, and we can take this opportunity of saying how much we owe to his kindness. We recognize in him one of the leaders of Egyptological science, and we also recognize the necessity of listening carefully to all he has to say on archaeological matters. But "The Discovery of the Law-Book under King Josiah" has dealt with only a few of the problems in connection with Deuteronomy. There is a great difference between the stability of lapis lazuli, the material on which the law-book of Khnum was written, and the parchment of the Book of the Law found by Hilkiah. Neither will the soil of Palestine preserve parchment as will the dry sands of Egypt. It is not a question of custom in Egypt or Palestine in this case. What does Deuteronomy say of its origin, and what water-marks can be seen in the document when held to the light? The law-book of Khnum is an illustration, not a confirmation. Egypt is not Palestine, neither was Solomon an Egyptian king.

To appeal "to what the Jews have always believed" regarding the Canon and its religious history is to appeal to a peculiar witness. What have they always believed regarding either? If they believe at the present time (and few educated rabbis do) that Moses wrote all the Pentateuch, and David wrote all the Psalms, and Solomon all the Proverbs and the Song and Ecclesiastes, does that settle the question of authorship? Would any such modern opinion be accepted for any other ancient writings? Why should a theory be right when held by Jews and wrong when held by Gentiles?

Even if psalms were written during the days of David, it would not prove that David wrote any, and particularly the five books of the Psalms of our Bible. If it could be proved that all the nations around Israel had codes of laws as elaborate as the Code of Hammurabi, that would not prove that Moses wrote the laws traditionally ascribed to him, let alone the whole Pentateuch.

So far we have not seen any evidence for the sweeping statement that "discovery after discovery has been made to prove the traditional view of the Bible." One writer in this particular number tremblingly admits that at times archaeology proves the correctness of the critical conclusion. There are times when archaeology, like Balaam, blesses what we would have it curse.

To come to another number we find an article entitled "Why Archaeologists Distrust the Higher Criticism."

An objection can be legitimately raised against the title of this article, for there are some of the world's greatest archaeologists who are, at the same time, leading critics. Such a title is likely to mislead the average reader in that he goes away with the idea that the archaeologists and the critics are sworn enemies. The critics dealt with in this article are not the leaders in criticism. This, however, we will overlook in spite of its unfairness. Let us examine the article.

The double narrative of the Flood-story is denied because "the Babylonian account gives long portions of a story of the Flood in which the peculiar characteristics of both of the supposed authors are found ages before the earliest, B.C. 850." This is almost like another

appeal to Balaam. I wish that the writer had had space for the Genesis story side by side with the Chaldean, and that the Genesis chapter had been thoroughly examined in detail. If the reader will read the authority appealed to¹ for the article, he may be led to a different conclusion from that of the writer. Does either of these scholars wish us to believe that the Genesis story is simply the Babylonian story dressed up in a Hebrew garb? In such a case, this would support the critical conclusion, for Sayce tells us that "in its present form it [the Babylonian account] gives evidence of being a combination of at least two earlier poems on the subject."² If they do not wish us so to believe, what bearing has the Babylonian story upon the arguments of the critics?

Let us examine the archaeological evidence against the critical views of Gen., chap. 14.³

We are informed that the "Chedor-laomer tablets have been found, and now it is recognized on every hand that the kings mentioned in this chapter are historical, and that the story is true to life."

Before dealing with this article it will be well to notice other articles bearing on the same chapter. In an article entitled "Archaeology and the Bible" we read this: "Critics of the advanced school have maintained that one result of modern scholarship is the determination that the patriarchs are not historical. . . . Archaeology, however,

has come to the rescue, and has upset the theorists. The spade of the excavator and skill of the decipherer have brought so much light to bear upon the subject that these critics have been compelled frequently to modify or change their position." The only conclusion we can reach after this opening statement is that evidence of the patriarchs has actually been discovered. Let us dogmatically state that no such evidence has yet been discovered. This we see when we read through this article, for all the evidence that this writer gives to prove that the patriarchs existed is that an inscription by Arioch has been discovered. After this we read: "Suffice it to say . . . that every atom of archaeological evidence that can be brought to bear upon the subject [the historicity of the patriarchs] corroborates the view that the patriarchs are historical." I venture to say that a statement wider of the mark has not been made for a long time in the literature of archaeology. Dr. Driver states the whole truth when he says: "Formerly the world in which the patriarchs moved seemed to be almost empty; now we see it filled with embassies, armies, busy cities, and long lines of traders passing to and fro between one centre of civilization and another; but amid all that crowded life we peer in vain for any trace of the fathers of the Hebrews; we listen in vain for any mention of their names; this is the whole change archaeology has wrought: it has given us a background and an atmosphere for the stories in Genesis;

¹ Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*.

² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

³ I have dealt with this chapter in another connection. See "A Plea for Unprejudiced Historical Biblical Study," *Biblical World*, March, 1915.

it is unable to recall or certify their heroes."

What if the names of Chedorlaomer and Arioch have been discovered (and the question is still worth asking: Have they been discovered?), does that prove that the story in Gen., chap. 14, is correct? Granting that Chedorlaomer was an Elamite king, does that prove that he made an expedition into the south of Canaan and captured Lot? The tablets are an illustration, not a confirmation. A writer in the *Open Court*¹ is not so dogmatic as the last writer. He tells us that the Arioch who wrote the inscription dealt with in his article "was probably the Arioch of the story of the Bible," though we gather that he accepts the historicity of the story of Gen., chap. 14, from the title of the article.

A few questions at this point are in order regarding this matter. Have tablets of Chedorlaomer and Arioch and Amraphel been found? Granting that they have, is it "a fact that the kings in this chapter are historical"? If they are historical, does this prove that Abraham with a few hundred servants warred with them and overthrew them and recaptured Lot?

We know that tablets have been discovered on which appear the name of one Kudur-Laghammar, who, by some philologists, has been identified with the Chedorlaomer of Gen., chap. 14. But is he the same person? Is Hammurabi the same person as the Amraphel of this chapter? So scholars have gone on repeating, and I fear that they have repeated because it seemed to furnish a proof for the historicity of the chapter. I know a very advanced critic who has

been roundly abused because of the peculiarity of his philological arguments in support of a still more peculiar theory. But I have also heard a proverb regarding those who live in glass houses.

Let me add, however, that I am willing to accept the identifications, though, as Petrie has written: "He [Amraphel] has been otherwise identified with Amar-pal, the father of Khammurabi."² But to return. To identify Kudur-Laghammar with Chedorlaomer and Hammurabi with Amraphel is to sacrifice every date held by the traditionalists and critics alike for the patriarchal period. The date of Hammurabi is now established as 2123-2081 B.C. Then how could the patriarch Abraham have anything to do with this king if there is the slightest approach to accuracy in the references bearing on the patriarchs? Allowing even one hundred and forty years for the three generations between Jacob and Moses, what have we? According to Gen. 47:9, Jacob told Pharaoh that he had lived one hundred and thirty years. He was born when his father was sixty years of age (Gen. 25:26). Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born (Gen. 21:5), and was seventy-five when he left Haran (Gen. 12:4). Now adding these together, with the seventeen years Jacob lived in Egypt (Gen. 47:28) we have 140+17+130+60, making a total of 347 years from the exodus back to the birth of Isaac. According to the majority of competent scholars the exodus took place under Merenptah *ca.* 1215 B.C. (I still hold this in the face of many interpretations of the Israelite stele of Merenptah. I believe that Dr.

¹ September, 1914.

² Egypt and Israel, p. 17.

Coburn has given us the solution when he argues that the Israelites were robbed at Kadesh.) Adding to this 1215 the 347 already reached, we have the date 1562 B.C. for the birth of Isaac. A few years only can be allowed for the supposed skirmish with Amraphel, say ten, and we reach a date *ca.* 1572 B.C. for the skirmish of Gen., chap. 14. I do not say that the figures are absolutely correct, but I do contend that the traditionalists must give up either the identification of Amraphel with Hammurabi, or the historicity of Gen., chap. 14. That we cannot give up the former is declared by practically all scholars today. That the historicity is being given up is one of the most patent facts among historians whether secular or biblical. What then becomes of the statement that this chapter is "true to life"? In what way has it been proved, to quote again the words of the writer mentioned, that "every atom of archaeological evidence that can be brought to bear upon the subject corroborates the view that the patriarchs are historical"? I may again quote the cautious words of Dr. Driver when he says: "The expedition described may in outline be historical; but improbabilities attach to many of the details: and though the four names in vs. 1 correspond, more or less exactly, with those of kings (*ca.* B.C. 2100) which have been discovered in the inscriptions, there is at present (June, 1909) no monumental corroboration of any part of the following narrative."¹

What was true in 1909 is still true in 1915. What Dr. Peters wrote in 1901²

could truthfully be written this year. "We have no record of this invasion, or of such a defeat of the Elamites and Babylonians, or of the name of Abraham, or of the names of the kings and cities of the Jordan valley mentioned in Genesis XIV."

Much is made of the finding of the name of Sargon, and we are told "it was not surprising that the question was raised as to whether any such person as Sargon existed." A number of conservative writers imply that the deniers were higher critics. To this Dr. Driver replies: "Certainly none of the leading critics of the previous decades questioned his existence: Eichorn, Gesenius, Hitzig, Ewald, and Knobel all rightly divined that he was a king who reigned between Shalmaneser and Sennacherib."³

One could make the same criticism of a popular, but very biased, book written by one of the leading English conservative Assyriologists. Here we find a radical misstating of the conclusions of the higher criticism. In the first chapter we are told that "the campaign of Chedorlaomer and his allies has proved to be no myth or fiction, but sober fact; the very names of the kings who took part in it have been recovered, and we know that the political situation presupposed by the narrative corresponds exactly with the actual requirements of history. It was the critic who was mistaken, and not the writer in Genesis." Yet again we are told: "Wherever archaeology has been able to test the negative conclusions of criticism, they have dissolved like a

¹ *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 15 (1912).

² *The Old Testament and the New Scholarship*, p. 248.

³ *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xxi.

bubble in the air." I fear this writer has forgotten a criticism he made some years ago regarding the Book of Daniel. Because he has the popular ear I must needs show how differently he can write on another occasion. In this second work we read: "Our examination of the fifth chapter of the Book of Daniel has led to a very definite result. The same monumental evidence which has vindicated the historical accuracy of the scriptural narrative in other places has pronounced against it." And yet again: "In the eyes of the Assyriologist the use of the word *Kasdim* in the Book of Daniel would alone be sufficient to indicate the date of the work with unerring accuracy." What is the date? The time of Daniel? Any period of the exile? Not so. "We are transported to a period later than that of Alexander the Great." What then becomes of the traditional authorship? And what becomes of the quotation I made previously?

In another chapter we have the well-worn argument against the critics based upon an alleged critical hypothesis that writing was unknown before the days of Moses. This is not an issue today as the writer must know and was not at any time a really vital issue. Criticism does not say that Moses could not have written, but it does say, and prove, that he could not have written the Pentateuch as we have it today.

In the third chapter we are told that Gen., chap. 14, "must have been derived from a Babylonian document," but no proof is as yet forthcoming. We are told also that the Babylonian story of the Deluge "was composed in the age of Abraham," another unwarranted as-

sertion without a shadow of proof. We are still further informed that "the biblical writer must have had the Babylonian version before him—if not in its literary form, at all events in some shape or other." But when did the biblical writer write the Deluge story? How did he obtain the Babylonian story? Until the writer has answered these questions it is beside the mark to speak of "the critical theory" as "only a philological mirage."

The whole of chap. iv is given up to the story of Gen., chap. 14, but seeing that nothing is stated but what we have already dealt with we can refer back to that discussion.

Chap. v deals with the code of Hammurabi, and we are given to understand that this code has forever shattered the conclusions of criticism, now that we know that writing and laws were in existence a thousand years before Moses. Let me in closing this section quote the writer: "We may sum up the results of the latest discovery in Assyriology. It has forever shattered the 'critical' theory which would put the Prophets before the Law, it has thrown light on the form and character of the Mosaic code, and it has indirectly vindicated the historical character of the narratives of Genesis. If such are the results of a single discovery, what may we not expect when the buried libraries of Babylonia have been more fully excavated, and their contents copied and read?" And as we close we ask ourselves: "What is there in this volume to prove the statements made?" There are numerous illustrations, but I fail to find one confirmation which in anywise discounts the critical view.

I admit that there has been a falling short on the other side. The pan-Babylonians have been as much at fault from their side as ever the traditionalists have been from theirs. The excitement caused by Professor Delitzsch when he gave his famous lectures on Babel and Bible has subsided and we see now that he was led to exaggerate unduly certain archaeological facts in the interests of a theory. With Professor Delitzsch we can rightly class the late Professor Winckler, as well as Zimmern and Jensen, who would have us believe that practically every Hebrew belief, rite, custom, and law is of Babylonian origin. The great work of Dr. Alfred Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient Orient*, while allowing for the originality of the substance of the biblical accounts, yet contends for the Babylonian origin in form. By some Jeremias has been regarded as a very bulwark of traditionalism, but surely his astral theory will no more help traditionalism than the views dealt with previously will banish criticism.

Space forbids an examination of these later writers and the views of their opponents who are equally under the influence of one-sided theories. But I must express my regret that scholars should so allow themselves to be carried away by their own theories. To go back to what was said above: One of the great masters in the field of Old Testament criticism, after years of the most, thorough research, and after as close an examination of the facts of archaeology as any other scholar I know, has stated plainly that "The attempt to

refute the conclusions of criticism by means of archaeology has signally failed. The archaeological discoveries of recent years have indeed been of singular interest and value: they have thrown a flood of light, sometimes as surprising as it was unexpected, upon many a previously dark and unknown region of antiquity. But, in spite of the ingenious hypotheses which have been framed to prove the contrary, they have revealed nothing which is in conflict with the generally accepted conclusions of critics."¹

Other scholars, equally devout and scholarly, have made similar statements. Their statements, however, have not come so prominently before the public as have the statements made by the writers of the traditionalist school, for, in spite of all our boasted liberty and enlightenment and love for search of truth and freedom of mind, we are scarcely able to examine the works of those we know are not in agreement with us. Not only this, but we also know how hard it is to get an article printed in the average religious journal when it disagrees with the conclusions of some well-known conservative scholar. Because their statements seem to lend a wonderful support to traditionalist views, they must be left unchallenged, and to challenge them is to be classed at once as a "rationalist," and "unbelieving critic," a "disturber of faith in the Word of God."

This is what I mean by "The Abuse of Biblical Archaeology." The uninitiated are in danger today of being carried away by the accounts of discoveries recorded in such articles as have been coming before us of late. Such articles

¹ *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xviii.

have not, in any single case I have seen, proved that "the traditional view of the Bible" is "the only correct view" as opposed to the critical view.

They have illustrated certain things in the biblical record, for which I am grateful, but at the same time I remember that illustration is not necessarily confirmation. Why, then, not use these discoveries for illustrating the biblical story instead of perverting them to an illegitimate and useless end? Truth is not served by such methods no matter what the motive is. Apologetics are very good and necessary, but when we have to apologize for our apologetics we need to consider where we stand. It is a commonplace that methods of argument are used in the "reconciling" of Scripture such as men would blush at if found using them for any other matter. I have before me seven articles by seven well-known and venerable church scholars and I confess that I have been ashamed to lend them to the young men of my church for fear they will think I am poorly off for argument. Why should this be the method employed? Is it not the outcome of a theory of the origin of Scripture which we can rightly afford to leave behind today? Surely the time has come when we can drop without loss the theory of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Argue as we will, the Bible has its human side, and what is human is fallible. The past is not the present, and neither is the West the East. Did the Bible make a claim to being a strictly historical record of events, then we should have to defend it perhaps, and to reconcile the discrepancies. It does not, however, make such a claim, and to force such

a claim on it is to be unfair to the Bible.

I have tried to be absolutely fair with the writers and with the articles they have written. The criticisms I have made were only recorded when I had heard these articles quoted in Bible classes as authoritative statements made by leading biblical scholars. It is at times disconcerting to be told in the class by some student that Professor So-and-So has discovered such and such a thing or monument and that these prove such and such chapters to be absolutely correct in detail when I know that Professor So-and-So has not discovered any such thing or monument. To tell the student this is to shake his faith both in the scholarship and in the truthfulness of Professor So-and-So, and often to cause him to put aside the paper or journal from which he gained his inaccurate information, a pity indeed, for these papers and journals are very useful in their place.

I value the work these scholars have accomplished for the illumination of the dark places of the Bible, but I regret the fact that an overemphasis of traditionalism has led them to believe that illumination meant confirmation. Archaeology is valuable and we need to get the Bible student to make a more thorough study of this fascinating subject. We shall fail, however, if we allow him to get the idea that it can be twisted out of shape when support of some particular theory is required. Let us be absolutely honest with all the findings of the archaeologists. The Bible does not need its aid "to prove its truthfulness." Faith ought to rest on something more substantial than

a cuneiform tablet or a flimsy sheet of papyrus, yea, on something more substantial even than a diorite monument. Archaeology is one of the most important of studies. While it does not give the confirmations so often claimed for it, it does give a wonderful illumination and illustration. Who, having studied in the galleries of an institution such as the British Museum, does not feel that the past is as real as the present? As he stands face to face with the monuments of kings of that old time, and as he reads their texts, he finds himself turning with a new feeling to that great

classic of the Semitic race—the Old Testament. I have dealt only with the Old Testament. The same could be written regarding the New Testament were there time and space. New light from the ancient East is continually breaking. Let us accept it for the illumination of the Book which means so much to the race.

(For model archaeological articles I would urge the close study of the articles by Dr. Paton appearing in the *Biblical World* for 1915. These articles are bound to affect a radical change in the future writing of archaeological articles.)

RELIGIOUS LIFE AT VASSAR

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Henry Noble MacCracken, the new president of Vassar College, is a layman and a Congregationalist. This will surprise those who have accepted without question the oft-repeated statement that Vassar is a Baptist college and that its head must be a Baptist clergyman. The only basis for such a statement is the fact that Matthew Vassar himself was a Baptist and the former presidents have been Baptist clergymen. But Matthew Vassar was much broader minded than most men of his generation in his views, not only of woman's education, but also of denominationalism. He never identified Christianity with his own special sect or sought to make his college a Baptist institution. On

the contrary, at the first meeting of the Trustees he expressly stated his wish that "all sectarian influences should be carefully excluded, but that the training of our students should never be intrusted to the skeptical, the irreligious, or the immoral." Of the original Board of Trustees, which he selected, a majority were Baptists, and the same is true today; but this is not a requirement of the charter. And in the selection of teachers, past and present, the wish of the Founder has been faithfully observed. The students come from homes of every variety of religious faith and are accepted without question as to creed; but the aim of those who have the college life in charge is to make it distinctly Christian.